

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City (1865-1900)

The Urban Frontier

- Cities grew very fast in America
 - NYC, Chicago, and Philadelphia grew to over a million in population between 1860 and 1890
 - Not only in U.S. — foreign countries also had population booms in cities (e.g., Shanghai and Buenos Aires)
- The steel skyscraper was invented, allowing for higher population density in the cities
 - Aided by invention of electric elevator for ease of vertical transportation
- Trolleys and subways increased transportation within a city
 - Increased the spread of a city and its suburbs
- Cities were “carved into distinctly different districts for business, industry, and residential neighborhoods— which were in turn segregated by race, ethnicity, and social class”
 - Shows widening socioeconomic divisions between upper and lower class in cities
- Industrial jobs in cities often outcompeted rural jobs
- Cities had a lot of electricity, indoor plumbing, and telephones— modern amenities at the time
 - This increased the appeal of living in cities
- Cities were not very sanitary
 - There was “impure water, uncollected garbage, unwashed bodies, and droppings” abundant in the cities
- There was a growth of slums
 - Many had tenements, small apartments that were often dumbbell-shaped
 - They often had very bad sanitation and poor living conditions
 - Low costs appealed to new immigrants and other poor people in the slums
- Cities were dangerous to live in
 - Most of Chicago burned down in a fire
 - The wealthy moved to the suburbs as a result

The New Immigration

- European immigrants were still moving in
 - Over 6 million immigrants between 1850s and 1870s
 - Western Europe was still the source of the most immigrants until the 1880s
 - These immigrants were dubbed the “Old Immigrants”
 - Wave of “New Immigrants” in 1880s — included “Jews, Italians, Croats, Slovaks, etc.”
 - These people came mostly from Eastern and Southern Europe
 - Had multiple causes of emigration from Europe:
 - Increased food production by U.S. and industrialization, so peasants looked to find work in America with a good supply of food
 - Persecution of minority groups in Europe drove more people to the U.S.
 - E.g., the Russians persecuted the Jews, which led more Jews to immigrate to the U.S.

- 60 million Europeans left Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and over half came to America
- Also some immigration from China (over 300,000)
- The rapid move to America was the “American fever,” was very widespread
 - People spread “America letters” that caused American fever, which were optimistic letters from people recently moved to the U.S.
- Many immigrants planned to stay only long enough to make some money that would survive their family for some time
- Immigrants tried to preserve their own culture, but also assimilated American culture and language

Migration and Settlement: There was an overall settlement pattern of moving towards the cities of America. There was both the push from foreign nations to the U.S. (immigration) as well as the move from rural areas to cities (urbanization). There were many factors that affected this, particularly the wide availability of industrial jobs and housing in the cities, as well as the abundance of modern technological inventions such as the telephone and the elevator. From Europe, there were two waves of immigration: the first was the “Old Immigrants” from western Europe, and the second was the “New Immigrants” from Southern and Eastern Europe. Lastly, settlement within the cities were not evenly distributed; there were different districts for different types of business, each of which were subdivided further by race and class. Thus, the urbanization movement was a very complex movement involving multiple causes and involved people settling in complex pattern in urban areas.

Parties and Social Reformers Reach Out

- Governments (federal, state, and city) did little to regulate the cities and immigration
 - Federal government had little direct power over the people in the cities
 - State and city governments were overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of immigrants
 - Local, unofficial governments in political machines had the most power
 - Political machines were political groups that exchanged votes for them for support (i.e., monetary aid) to their supporters
 - Political machines were headed by bosses such as Boss Tweed, who were very powerful
 - They “provided jobs on the city’s payroll, found housing for new arrivals, tided over the needy with gifts of food and clothing, patched up minor scrapes with the law, and helped get schools, parks, and hospitals built in immigrant neighborhoods” — had a large role in society for new immigrants who had little other help
- Several clergymen began to preach the “Social Gospel” (religion for social reform) for change to the cities
 - Walter Rauschenbusch and Washington Gladden were important pastors preaching the social gospel for pressing issues in the cities that they lived in (NYC and Columbus, respectively)
 - They believed in a socialist government as the logical and best outcome for a society that would follow the beliefs of Christianity

- Jane Addams was a middle-class, educated woman dedicated to improving the conditions for the poor in urban areas
 - She established the settlement house Hull House in Chicago
 - A settlement home “offered instruction in English, counseling to help newcomers cope with American big-city life, child-care services for working mothers, and cultural activities for neighborhood residents”
 - Settlement houses were hubs of women reformist activity
 - Florence Kelley was a major women’s activist in the cities
 - Other settlement homes were created in other major cities
 - Lillian Wald created one in NYC
 - She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts on fighting poverty

Narrowing the Welcome Mat

- Nativism increased again in the 1880s
 - Originally started against Irish and Germans in 1840s
 - Revived against the New Immigrants (Southern and Eastern Europe)
 - Americans were worried that the New Immigrants, with high birthrate, would be mixed in and eventually become the majority population in the U.S., which would give them many votes and much political power
 - Americans blamed immigrants for making the urban environment too financially competitive, with immigrants working for such low wages
 - Anti-foreign organizations, such as the American Protective Association (APA), supported and sponsored anti-foreigner actions
 - The APA urged its members to vote against Roman Catholics (which many of the New Immigrants were)
 - Trade unionists found it hard to assimilate immigrants with a foreign language, worried that the cheap labor would bring down prices too much and make it too hard to compete
- Congress passed restrictive immigration laws
 - Passed a law in 1882 that prohibited paupers, criminals, and convicts from entering the U.S. at the expense of the shipper
 - Passed the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) restricting the Chinese ethnic group
 - Passed a law in 1885 prohibiting immigration of workers upon a contract with Americans
 - Later immigration tightened against “insane, polygamists, prostitutes, alcoholics, anarchists, and people carrying contagious diseases”
 - A literary test for immigrants was proposed in 1800s and enacted in 1917
- The Statue of Liberty was given to the U.S. from France as a gift in 1883
- Immigrants were important people in American history, toiling laborers who manned the machines essential to American industrial superiority

American and National Identity: The discord between the reconciliatory attitudes of some Americans (e.g., Jane Addams) towards immigrants and the hateful, xenophobic attitudes of others is a recurring theme

and a part of American identity. Americans have always been worried about immigrants stealing their jobs; as a result, the poorer, working class laborers, who make up the majority of the population, were able to create anti-immigration organizations and acts. This is in conflict with philanthropic Americans such as those who created and ran settlement homes; these people are wealthier, and decide to use their financial security (because immigrants cannot steal higher-level, higher-paying jobs) to help others. This is a core idea in American identity, and it lingers through today: there is still a common sentiment, especially amongst poorer classes, to stop immigration (and also prevent outsourcing, which also gives jobs to lower-pay foreigners), while the upper-class is supportive of immigration.

Churches Confront the Urban Challenge

- Churches suffered from the act of moving to urban areas, where influence was weaker because of less religious working-class people and higher rates of immigrants without church
 - They were often slow to act against urban injustices, because “the mounting emphasis was on materialism”; i.e., people were greedy and tended to try and keep their wealth rather than to help others
- Liberal Protestants came to be a main religion between 1875 and 1925
 - Had radical ideas based in “the Unitarian revolt against orthodox Calvinism”
 - They took the Bible less literally
 - They believed in the Social Gospel (reform-minded religion)
 - Had more modern religious ideas that appealed more to the citygoers of the time
- Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths (carried by many of the New Immigrants) were becoming very prominent in American demographics
 - Roman Catholicism was dominant faith by 1900
- There were over 150 religious faiths by 1890
 - Two new religious denominations were the Salvation Army, which provided practical services such as free soup, and the Church of Christ, Scientist, that claimed that Christianity heals sickness
 - The Young Men’s Christian Association, YMCA (and YWCA) was a popular organization for the youth that combined religious and physical education

Darwin Disrupts the Churches

- Charles Darwin suggested the theory of natural selection and evolution to explain the existence of all life
 - This directly contradicted the “dogma of special creations” (the religious model of creation) and thus offended the churches
 - This split the church into two sections:
 - There was a minority conservative faction that stood behind the bible, eventually led to fundamentalism (strong religious belief in the literal interpretation of the Bible) in the 20th century
 - Most religious members “refused to accept the Bible in its entirety as either history or science”; accepted the fact that Darwin’s theory of evolution was science and that the Bible was an allegorical book
 - Darwin weakened religious fervor and increased skepticism of faith

- Evolution had set a precedent for future scientific discoveries that contradicted religion: religion was often not discussed, but understood as a separate entity (as the majority of Christians had accepted for evolution)

Culture and Society: The inability of churches to react to a more urban setting and to the alternate theory of creation by science are good indicators of the general decline of the religiosity of society. While some new religious sects form, such as “liberal protestants,” most new religious sects have some practical side to them, such as the Salvation Army (which does community service activities) and the Church of Christ, Scientist (which uses scientific observations to evidence its claim). Even YMCA, a religious organization for children, emphasizes practical skills such as exercise as well. Darwin’s theory is the epitome of the loss of religion; scientists began to study and teach only evolution as a theory of creation, shunning the biblical study as an allegory only. This shows how society is shifting towards realism, a representation of life in more vivid detail and less up to imagination, which includes scientific reasoning and shuns unrealistic, fantastical biblical stories.

The Lust for Learning

- People began increasingly to realize that education was necessary for a less ignorant, more functional political people
 - Most states required elementary school education by 1870
 - An increasing number of states supported free secondary education (high school) in the 1880s and 1890s
 - Teacher-training schools dramatically increased in number
 - Kindergartens increased in number
 - New Immigration increased popularity of private Catholic schools
 - Chatauqua movement (1874) sponsored educational lectures and self-study courses
- Publically-funded education was becoming more of a popular idea
- Urban centers generally had better education than rural ones

Booker T. Washington and Education for Black People

- The South had a 44% illiteracy rate for non-whites in 1900
 - Their education was far behind, mostly because of the relative poverty they were in without the profitable industry and urban centers like the North, and because they were still recovering from their loss in the Civil War
- Booker T. Washington was a former slave who taught at an industrial school
 - He helped many blacks gain a respectable part in society by teaching them useful trades
 - His method was “accommodationist” because it bolstered blacks without accusing white supremacy; didn’t touch on the idea of social equality, but simply helped blacks practically in society
 - He taught at the Tuskegee Institute, whose curriculum was greatly altered by his teaching so that it became the best place for African Americans to study
 - George Washington Carver, a famous black chemist and botanist, studied there
- Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois was another leader of the racial equality movement

- He criticized Booker T. Washington for accepting the black's fate as only capable of handling manual labor
- He himself was of many different ethnicities
- Wanted complete equality for blacks
- Founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (1909)

The Hallowed Halls of Ivy

- Colleges sprung up in the decades following the Civil War
 - People looked at a college education as the key to financial success in the future
 - Women's colleges such as Vassar were becoming increasingly common
 - By 1880 ½ of college graduates were women
 - More colleges were accepting of blacks
 - This included Howard University, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University
- The Morrill Act of 1862 provided generous land grants to the states for educational institutes
 - Land-grant colleges, colleges built on government-given land, sprung up as a result of the Morrill Act
 - Many became state universities
 - The Hatch Act of 1887 funded "agricultural experiment stations" related to the land-grant colleges
 - Helped create incentive for land-grant colleges, over 100 land-grant colleges created as a result
- Many philanthropists supported public education institutes
 - Philanthropists donated \$150 million to schools from 1878 to 1898
 - Philanthropist-funded colleges included Cornell and Leland Stanford Junior
 - Philanthropists included Rockefeller (for U. of Chicago)
- There was a great increase of professional and technical schools with more modern equipment
 - Included John Hopkins University, which was a highly prestigious school that could compete with high-quality foreign schools, where scholars were often sent for the highest education
- Universities became secular
 - Initially they believed in the "unity of truth," or the idea that knowledge and morality existed together, in the same system
 - After the controversy over evolution with Darwin, because of the difficulty to reconcile and explain both sides, colleges separated religion from science
- Universities began to embrace specialization
 - Specialization was when a person took classes specific to their career goals
 - The idea of electives was becoming more popular, and people were taking more specialized courses— the beginning of having majors
- Medical schools increased in number after the Civil War
 - New, scientific medicines (rather than traditional ones) were beginning to gain ground and improved public health
 - New medical practices such as pasteurization were introduced into medical sciences

- William James was an influential intellectual at Harvard that supported the idea of pragmatism
 - Pragmatism is idea that “the truth of an idea was to be tested, above all, by its practical consequences” — moved far away from original religious beliefs
 - He wrote multiple books on psychology and faith

American and National Identity: This “lust for learning” that spawned huge government funding of free public education is caused by the aspect of American identity to never settle for less. People realize that education benefits a population by making them less ignorant, so they choose to reform towards it. The African Americans, like their efforts to achieve racial or legal equality, felt the need to strive for the same level of education, with or without the support of the federal government’s funding. Booker T. Washington motivated his students and himself to become equal to the whites by creating an efficient trade school of their own. Later, even this ceased to be enough, and secondary schools and universities popped up at an incredible rate. Not only does the increase in the educational system show American perseverance to always try to improve one’s situation, but it also demonstrates the American democratic ideal of needing a well-educated, active people who can participate in government. Had there not been adequate public schooling, neither would democracy be allowed to continue— public schooling preserves the fundamental American value of democracy.

The Appeal of the Press

- Books were a popular form of educational medium and enjoyment
- Libraries were becoming more common
 - Library of Congress was built in 1897, was the largest and costliest library yet
 - By 1900 there were 9,000 libraries with over 300 books
- Philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie donated a lot of money to libraries
- Invention of Linotype machine (for printing) helped increase rate of printing readable media
 - However, this was accompanied by a fear of offending advertisers
- Sensationalism (i.e., “sex, scandal, and other human-interest stories”) became popular
 - The drama of stories simply written most for fun was very appealing to the semi-literate audience of the U.S.
 - Joseph Pulitzer (owner of *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *New York World*) and William Randolph Hearst (owner of *San Francisco Examiner*) both used sensationalism to their advantage to become very popular magazines
 - Pulitzer inspired the term yellow journalism, which means writing “based upon sensationalism and crude exaggeration”
 - However, they were overly competitive and tried too hard to exaggerate things for sensationalism sake; took away a little from the effect

Apostles of Reform

- Magazines were in wide circulation and widely read in the U.S.
 - There were many average ones such as the *Harper’s*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Scribner’s Monthly*
 - The New York *Nation* was very influential because it had liberal ideas that advocated “a civil-service reform, honesty in government, and a moderate tariff”

- Henry George was a controversial writer and political theorist
 - He wrote *Progress and Poverty* that theorized that a “a growing population on a fixed supply of land unjustifiably pushed up property values, showering unearned profits on owners of land”
 - His proposed solution was to take the profits away from the landowners (a 100% tax), which would remove the inequity of the situation and stimulate economic growth with more tax money
 - Landowners widely rejected his idea, made it difficult for him to publish his book
 - When his book did come out, it became a best-seller and sold 3 million copies, showing the popularity of his book among the poorer masses
- Edward Bellamy was another “journalist-reformer”
 - He published *Looking Backward* (1888) that imagined a socialistic utopia in which big business is acquired by the government to serve the public interest
 - Also was a bestseller like *Progress and Poverty* that sold a million copies because of the distrust towards trusts and the corruption associated with them

The New Morality

- Victoria Woodhull was a feminist and free-love advocate who was very controversial
 - She and her sister ran the newspaper, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*
 - At the time, the idea of “free love” became more common
 - Free love is the ability to have relationships unrestricted by marriage
 - Most Americans were against free love, especially Anthony Comstock
 - With a greater degree of women's freedom, divorce rates and birth control increased
 - She was the first female presidential candidate of the U.S.

Politics and Power: What began as a source of entertainment and current events became a political issue. Newspapers and magazines during this period were very opinionated and reform-minded, rather than simply informational. The *Nation* spread liberal ideas; Henry George and Edward Bellamy spread socialistic ideas; and Victoria Woodhull advocated for free love. Thus this demonstrated the political potential of these periodicals to sway public opinion. Had their socialistic and pro-free-love views been less controversial, these publications likely would have carried a much greater effect in society. Secondly, the fierce competition between the yellow-journalists Pulitzer and Hearst furthers this potential by demonstrating that they can be used to compete against one another. This competition while economic, is also political in nature: both journalists try to achieve power by appealing more to the audience. Thus these periodicals are the basis for written advertisements for political candidates, and advertising continues ubiquitously up through today.

Families and Women in the City

- Urban life was hard on families, often leading to stress within the family that led to divorce
 - Divorce rates were so high that this was known as the “Divorce Revolution”
- Birth rates dropped in urban areas because it meant more food necessary to feed the family and more people crowding in a tenement

- Marriages were also delayed and contraceptives used, which helped to decrease birth rate
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman exemplified the growing independence of women
 - She wrote *Women and Economics*, a piece of feminist literature
 - She told women to become less dependent on men and advocated for a stronger involvement of women in the work force
 - Over a million women joined the work force in the 1890s, showing that her ideas were a trend of the era
 - Women's work was hard and could be limited by "race, ethnicity, and class," but still gave some degrees of economic freedom
 - She didn't believe in traditional feminist values all of the time and was very independent, doing non-conventional activities such as vigorous exercise and meditation
- Women were still trying to get the vote
 - The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) (1890) was formed
 - Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were amongst its founders, both of whom were long-time women's suffrage leaders
 - Carrie Chapman Catt was a leader of the woman's suffrage movement after 1900
 - Focused on the idea that voting would help increase women's freedom, rather than the idea that women were equal to men and therefore should be able to vote
 - Women were increasingly allowed to vote in local elections
 - Wyoming was the first state to allow women to vote in 1869
 - Urban life spawned some women-based organizations, such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs with over 200,000 members in 1900
 - The equal women's voting rights in New Zealand in 1893 inspired women's suffrage advocates in the U.S.
 - The women's suffrage movement was racist because they thought black women would make their chances of gaining suffrage lower
 - Black women created the National Association of Colored Women (1896) despite the white women's efforts against them

Prohibiting Alcohol and Promoting Reform

- An addiction to alcohol by men kept some poor families poor
- Alcohol consumption had risen during the Civil War days and stayed high
- Some foreigners were very resistant to restrictions on alcohol
- The National Prohibition party (1869) was created and advocated teetotalism
 - Only got a few votes in presidential elections, not very popular
- Women formed the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) (1874)
- Carrie A. Nation made the temperance movement less appealing to most people by smashing bars and alcohol bottles with a hatchet
 - Showed to people a violence for temperance that they did not want to have
- The Anti-Saloon League (1893) was formed

- The 18th Amendment prohibiting the consumption of alcohol nationally was appended to the Constitution

Postwar Fiction, Lowbrow and High

- “Dime novels” were a popular form of literature amongst youths, often depicting fictional stories of heroism in the West
 - Harlan P. Halsey wrote 650 of these, made a fortune out of it
- General Lew Wallace wrote novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880) that was very popular amongst anti-Darwinists
 - It sold 2 million copies because it was very popular amongst people who did not believe in evolution
- Horatio Alger wrote over 100 books of fiction for youth that sold over 17 million copies
 - They taught virtues and life lessons like any other allegory or fable
- Writing moved towards practical content: “realism, naturalism, and regionalism” rather than more romantic ideals of previous ages.
 - Realism was very common in Gilded Age literature
 - William Dean Howells wrote many books about ordinary subjects in a realistic setting, experimenting with the social background
 - Mark Twain was an influential realism-ic writer
 - He wrote *Roughing It* (1872) about a realistic journey to the West and co-authored *The Gilded Age* (1873), a political satire of the Gilded Age
 - He also wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which were masterpieces that wrote about fictional adventures of ordinary boys
 - Henry James was a realist who wrote about the theme of American innocence (as compared to Europe)
 - He often wrote with women as central characters and points of complexity, creating a “psychological realism” that protagonized women
 - Naturalism was “a more intense literary response than mainstream realism to the social dislocations and scientific tumult of late-nineteenth-century America”
 - Edith Wharton wrote about moral shortcomings in the years after the Civil War
 - Naturalists examined the influence of heredity and social environments on a person
 - Stephen Crane wrote about grim stories of extreme psychological stress in urban, Gilded Age America and of Civil War fighting
 - Other naturalist writers included Jack London, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser
 - Regionalism “sought to chronicle the peculiarities of local ways of life before the coming wave of industrial standardization”; i.e., “provincial nostalgia”
- Women also began writing novels
 - Kate Chopin wrote books dealing with serious topics in *The Awakening*
- Henry Adams was a gifted writer
 - Great-grandson of president John Adams

- He was a “historian, novelist, and critic,” writing historically and autobiographically

Artistic Triumphs

- Realism and regionalism also appeared in American art
 - Important artists included Thomas Eakins (painted images of hometown; regionalism), Winslow Homer (drew sketches of rural life; regionalism), James Whistler (portraits; realism), John Singer Sargent (portraits; realism), Augustus Saint-Gaudens (scenes of the Civil War; realism)
- Music also became more popular
 - The Metropolitan Opera House in NYC opened
 - The phonograph was invented by Edison, became a household product by 1900 (over 150,000 homes)
- There was the City Beautiful movement that wanted a “city not just to look beautiful but also to convey a confident sense of harmony, order, and monumentality”
 - Classical art styles were copied from Europe
 - This movement created the Grand Central Terminal and more buildings
 - David Burnham created a design for the World’s Columbian Exposition for Chicago (1893)
 - This was a grand design that inspired many future city planners to create more artistic cities

Culture and Society: The advancement of art forms into three new movements— realism, naturalism, and regionalism— shows an increased cultural importance placed on art, and it shows how the societal perspective has shifted in the direction of these three movements. Realism shows life as it is, which demonstrates the moving away from the past passionate Romanticism and towards more realistic, scientific views. Regionalism reflects the general societal shift towards urbanization. Naturalism shows the strife and conflict caused by differences in opinion that characterized the Civil War and the era afterwards full of corruption and the difference between religious and scientific views. The same is true for both the visual and auditory arts, and they both represent changes in societal ideas.

The Business of Amusement

- Americans looked for fun diversions in ordinary living
 - People often went to see shows
 - “Vaudeville” and minstrel shows (performed by blacks) were popular
 - The circus became popular with the creation of Barnum and Bailey circus
 - There were “Wild West” shows that were also popular
- Baseball became a pastime for many people, and basketball was invented; football and boxing, despite their violence, also became popular
 - A professional league was created for baseball, and they went on a world tour
- The modern bicycle was invented
 - Many women used this to exercise and gain some freedom

American and National Identity: Fun was not a focus on the American agenda previously, and its expansion during the Gilded Age with the invention of new types of shows (e.g., Vaudeville, minstrel, circus, and

Wild West shows), sports (e.g., baseball, basketball, football, boxing, bicycling), and artistic enjoyments (e.g., listening to a phonograph) shows a new aspect of American identity. Previous to the Gilded Age lay the tumultuous times of the Civil War, the controversial land-expansion and slavery acts, the War of 1812, and the Revolutionary War. Only in the Gilded Age, when people were more comfortably settled in a conflict-less era were they free enough to readily develop new forms of entertainment for themselves, as in the examples above. Although it did not play a large role in history in the serious times of the Civil War and the antebellum period, fun has a dominant role in society today and since the Gilded Age: the “Roaring ‘20s” and the “hipster” age of the 1980s exemplified the continued fun side to America.